

House and congressional Democrats seem to be living in a different reality, telling us that the President's agenda "will not add to inflationary pressure."

Mr. Speaker, the real risk here would be passing the Democrat's multitrillion-dollar tax and spend package. My colleagues in the House seem to be turning a blind eye to what Americans are actually experiencing.

Make no mistake, spending trillions, while punishing the middle class and job creators, will make inflation worse.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to oppose this legislation.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVER MONTH

(Mr. LAHOOD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Family Caregiver Month.

More than 95 percent of individuals with dementia also have one or more chronic conditions. Individuals with dementia rely heavily on their family members or other caregivers to provide time, transportation, and other health services, which can be economically and emotionally challenging for a family.

In Illinois alone, we have over 381,000 caregivers for people living with dementia, and 53.5 percent of them have their own chronic health conditions.

During National Family Caregiver Month, it is important to recognize the dedication and sacrifice that families and caregivers provide for their loved ones.

My legislation, the Comprehensive Care for Alzheimer's Act, provides additional support to dementia patients and caregivers. The bill would direct the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation to implement a dementia care model to test comprehensive care management services and would make a big impact on the lives of people living with dementia and their caregivers.

As I travel throughout Illinois, dementia care and Alzheimer's advocates continue to share their caregiving stories with me. Mr. Speaker, I ask for support of this bill.

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INVESTMENTS IN THE NATIVE HAWAIIAN COMMUNITY

(Mr. KAHELE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KAHELE. Mr. Speaker, as a native Hawaiian, I am excited to highlight how the Build Back Better Act will benefit the native Hawaiian community and all of the original indigenous peoples, the first peoples of these nations, across the United States.

The Build Back Better Act will strengthen our collective indigenous communities through investments in

culturally relevant healthcare, housing and community development, professional development for indigenous languages and early childhood educators, accelerator programs for small businesses, and funding for native Hawaiian healthcare systems.

These programs further the trust responsibility from the United States Government to indigenous communities.

The Build Back Better Act also creates opportunities for Federal consultation on land use planning, development, and infrastructure projects—something our indigenous communities have requested for years.

That is why we must pass the Build Back Better Act and add its investments to the initiatives we just passed in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The Build Back Better Act supports our indigenous communities and creates opportunity for indigenous peoples while ensuring that America's richest citizens pay their fair share.

Mahalo, Mr. Speaker.

SOUTHERN BORDER CRISIS

(Mr. BILIRAKIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the dangerous situation at our southern border.

Since President Biden took office, there have been over 1.4 million illegal border crossings. These record-high apprehensions keep increasing with no end in sight, and now a new caravan of migrants is headed through Mexico to our southern border, as we speak.

Instead of addressing what has become a humanitarian, health, and national security problem, this administration and congressional Democrats keep announcing plans that will only exacerbate the problem.

For example, the administration has discussed paying illegal immigrants settlement payments of up to \$450,000, and the spending package being pushed through this Chamber includes amnesty for up to 10 million illegal immigrants and up to \$100 billion in taxpayer-funded benefits for them.

These irresponsible proposals and dangerous open border policies will continue to fuel the crisis and encourage more illegal activity at the border. We must secure our borders and ensure that the rule of law applies to everyone.

HONORING FALLEN HEROES

(Mrs. KIM of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor our 13 fallen servicemembers who made the ultimate sacrifice to save the lives of Americans and allies in Afghanistan at the Kabul Airport at the end of August.

These brave men and women, including southern California marines Lance Corporal Dylan Merola, Lance Corporal Kareem Nikoui, and Corporal Hunter Lopez, were young—many in their twenties—and incredibly brave. They valiantly put their lives on the line for others. Their courage and heroism in the face of danger will never be forgotten.

I am proud that the House of Representatives came together to honor their memory and posthumously award these fallen heroes a well-deserved Congressional Gold Medal.

Mr. Speaker, we remember their names and their stories always, and we continue to rally with our new Gold Star families.

RECOGNIZING THE THOMAS FAMILY OF MEYERSDALE, PENNSYLVANIA, AND THEIR ACTS OF KINDNESS

(Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Thomas family of Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, who tragically lost their son, Trevor, a student athlete who played baseball at Allegany College of Maryland and at Penn State.

In the face of that loss, the Thomas family has responded with love and compassion for their community. In honor of their son's commitment to serving others, the Thomas family printed small cards that encouraged their neighbors to help others through acts of kindness.

Those cards have inspired incredible gestures of generosity in our community. The acts of kindness were wide-ranging. From preparing care packages for the homeless to donating blood to handing out doughnuts and even delivering flowers to strangers, members of the community looked to see what they could do to help one another.

Together, the people of Somerset County are working to keep Trevor's memory alive through their acts of service for one another.

On each card that the family has distributed is a simple mantra that defined the way that Trevor lived his life. It is a mantra that we should all aspire to: Be somebody who makes everybody feel like somebody.

ENDING EXPLOITATION OF VETERANS

(Mr. CAWTHORN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CAWTHORN. Mr. Speaker, freedom is born through the sacrifice of patriots. We occupy this Chamber today and walk free among our countrymen because generation after generation of liberty-minded warriors surrendered their lives to the conviction that America was worth defending. Their

blood, their sweat, and their sacrifice are the currency for our freedom.

Their sacrifice must never be exploited. I am honored to bring before this Chamber today legislation that ends the exploitation of veterans' finances and taxpayer dollars. A loophole exists in the GI Bill that allows some public flight schools to charge exorbitant amounts of money to veterans and taxpayers for veterans' tuition.

My legislation, the Fly Vets Act, not only stops this loophole dead in its tracks, but it empowers veterans and drastically expands their benefits. It allows them to pay for flight training through accelerated payments and allows them to double the monetary cap on both tuition and fees per year. This bill does not cut benefits in any way. It gives power back to our heroes in uniform.

I thank the many VSOs who support this legislation, along with Congresswoman UNDERWOOD for encompassing this legislation in her bill and working with me across party lines to ensure that the exploitation of veterans and taxpayers ends today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MALINOWSKI). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

VA ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2021

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4591) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress periodic reports on the costs of the Department of Veterans Affairs Electronic Health Record Modernization program, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4591

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "VA Electronic Health Record Transparency Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. REPORTS ON COSTS, PERFORMANCE METRICS, AND OUTCOMES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD MODERNIZATION PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 503 of the Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–407; 38 U.S.C. 5701 note prec.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f);

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following new subsection (e):

“(e) QUARTERLY REPORTS.—

“(1) REPORTS ON COSTS OF EHRM PROGRAM.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the VA Electronic Health

Record Transparency Act of 2021, and every 30 days after the last day of each fiscal quarter thereafter until the termination date specified in paragraph (3), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the costs of the Electronic Health Record Modernization program of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Each such report shall include, for the period covered by the report and for the total period beginning on the date of the enactment of the VA Electronic Health Record Transparency Act of 2021 and ending on the date of the submittal of the report, a description of all actual expenses of, and driven by, such program, including any such expenses paid using—

“(A) any funds appropriated for the Department of Veterans Affairs, for any source or account, expended by any organizational element of the Department or by the Federal Electronic Health Record Modernization Office for the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program;

“(B) any funds, from any source or account, expended by any organizational element of the Department for physical or technology infrastructure modifications, enhancements, improvements, or expansions at a facility of the Department necessitated by, or related or pertaining to, the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program; and

“(C) any funds, from any source or account, expended by any organizational element of the Department or by the Federal Electronic Health Record Modernization Office for consultants, support contractors, or experts related or pertaining to the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program.

“(2) REPORTS ON PERFORMANCE METRICS AND OUTCOMES.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the VA Electronic Health Record Transparency Act of 2021, and every 30 days after the last day of each fiscal quarter thereafter until the termination date specified in paragraph (3), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the performance metrics and outcomes of the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program. Each such report shall include, for the period covered by the report—

“(A) a list of the quality, performance, safety, or value metrics, key performance indicators, and other diagnostic or evaluation criteria in use to assess the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program and the electronic health record system, in general and at individual facilities, with respect to veterans, employees of the Department, and Departmental operations;

“(B) an explanation of any change to any of such metrics, indicators, and criteria compared to the metrics, indicators, and criteria included in any previous report submitted under this paragraph;

“(C) the data supporting or demonstrating each such metric, indicator, and criteria compared to the data supporting or demonstrating such metric, indicator, or criteria as included in the previous report submitted under this paragraph; and

“(D) a list of patient safety reports, incidents, alerts, or disclosures at each facility of the Department where the electronic health record system has been implemented.

“(3) TERMINATION DATE.—The requirement to submit a report under paragraph (1) shall terminate on the date that is 90 days after the date on which the Secretary submits to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives certification that the Electronic Health Record Modernization program has been fully implemented.”; and

(3) in subsection (f), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(3) The term ‘electronic health record system’ means the electronic health record system implemented pursuant to the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program.

“(4) The term ‘Federal Electronic Health Record Management Office’ means the office established under section 1635(b) of the Wounded Warrior Act (title XVI of Public Law 110–181; 10 U.S.C. 1071 note).

“(5) The term ‘facility of the Department’ includes a joint facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 4591, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4591, the VA Electronic Health Record Transparency Act of 2021, as amended.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has struggled to produce reliable cost estimates and reporting on the infrastructure needs associated with its \$16 billion electronic health record modernization project. This bill is a good governance measure which will enable Congress to conduct better oversight and hold VA accountable for its spending.

It is essential that we ensure that taxpayer funds meant to serve veterans are being used properly and that VA is maintaining detailed records of its IT and physical infrastructure expenditures. We owe that to the veterans who get their care from VA and to the American taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 4591, as amended, which was unanimously supported in committee.

I reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4591, as amended, the VA Electronic Health Record Transparency Act.

Since the very beginning of the Electronic Health Record Modernization, or the EHRM, program, this committee has been requesting accurate and up-to-date lifecycle cost estimates from VA. Despite our requests, VA has never provided a credible lifecycle cost estimate. VA's cost estimates could not withstand even the most basic scrutiny.